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EL's first commercial dealer gets into gear

2008/03/10

EAST London's first VW commercial vehicle dealership, an extension of Barnes Motors, has been officially launched.

The 100% black-owned VW commercial vehicle dealership is part of Barnes Motors, acquired jointly by Siphon Pityana's Izingwe Automotive Investment (IAI) and the National Empowerment Fund (NEF) in 2006.

The vehicle dealership aims to offer a full range of commercial vehicles and service.

Nkulie Pityana, who heads the dealership, said the business serves much of the eastern half of the Eastern Cape and is well positioned to supply vehicles into the transport, construction and passenger bus markets.

The commercial division has already shifted into gear, reporting sales of 71 medium and 13 heavy commercial vehicles, as well as 16 large buses in February 2008 alone. This is in addition to 311 light commercial vehicles on the passenger vehicle side.

Pityana believes fleet operators and owners of small companies in the region will be more confident purchasing VW commercial vehicles now that there is a specialised and dedicated workshop and dealership to cater for their needs.

An additional selling point is the fact that the dealership is fully BEE compliant.

"We are, I think, the only truck dealership in the country headed by a black woman – and one who is actively involved in the day-to-day running of the business," she said.

Transport MEC Thobile Mhlaho congratulated Izingwe and pledged to support the company, which he hailed as the first to offer a full range of commercial vehicles to meet the demand of the Eastern Cape market.

"As the department responsible for public transport we pledge support as a matter of principle. It is our responsibility to support black economic empowerment without being apologetic. We desperately need facilities like this," said Mhlaho.

Volkswagen of South Africa Sales and Marketing Director Mike Glendinning congratulated Izingwe on the growth of its East London franchise.

"The opening of a brand new, independent Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles dealership is indicative of the success of this franchise in East London and its surrounding areas.

"It is pleasing to see such a positive spin-off to the growth of the commercial vehicle market, including the resultant job creation."

Pityana sees the dealership as completing the empowerment chain. Volkswagen buses and heavy trucks are being assembled in Uitenhage by a black-owned company created by former VW employees. -By SIYA MITI

Business Reporter



BREAKING NEW GROUND: East London's new Volkswagen Commercial dealership head, Nkulie Pityana, speaks at its launch ceremony last week.

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